

December 21, 2022

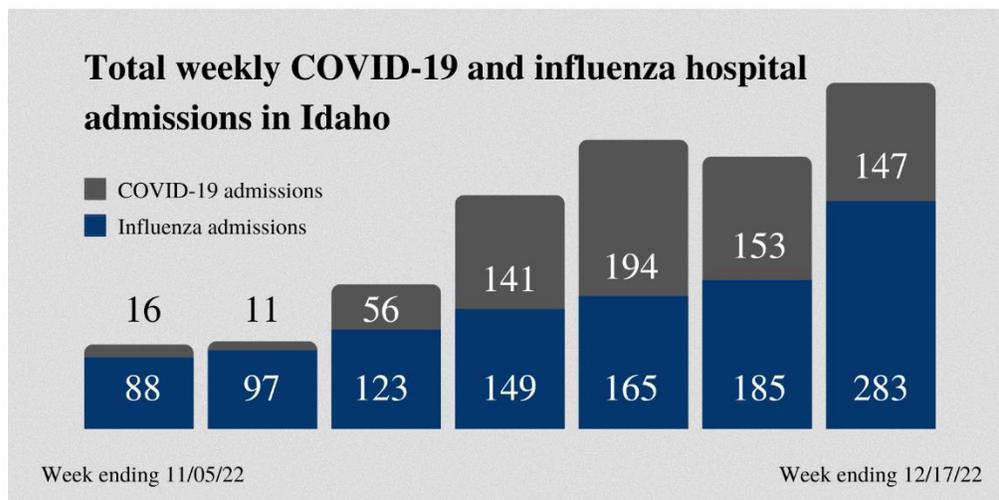
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Respiratory season update:

**RSV cases declining, COVID-19 cases plateau
severe influenza cases continue to rise.**

South Central Idaho – As the respiratory season continues, South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) again urges residents to stay home when they are sick and take extra precautions to protect their health. Wearing a mask around other people, getting vaccinated several weeks before gathering in groups, consistent healthy living, and testing for common diseases as soon as you get sick can also help protect against the spread of more serious viruses.

Data from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) show hospital admissions for influenza patients increased from 185 patients two weeks ago to 283 patients last week. Nearly twice as many patients were admitted with influenza compared to COVID-19 last week.



Meanwhile, the positivity rate for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) lab tests in the state have mostly plateaued around 20 percent over the last couple of weeks. In south central Idaho, the positivity rate sits at about 23 percent for the season. These rates are much higher than usual for this time of year.

Many respiratory viruses are contagious before symptoms start so practicing good hygiene at all times can help prevent disease spread. SCPHD recommends people:

- Stay home when sick.
- Get a vaccination/booster for any viruses circulating. In our region this includes influenza and COVID-19.
- Wash hands often, especially after sneezing, coughing, using a bathroom, or blowing your nose. It is always important to wash your hands before touching your face.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth whenever possible.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes or cough into your sleeve.
- Make healthy living a priority: get enough sleep, exercise regularly, keep a healthy weight, and keep a balanced and healthy diet.
- Quit habits that harm your respiratory and immune health. This includes overindulging in alcohol, using tobacco/nicotine products, taking drugs that are not prescribed for you.

Vaccination is particularly important for people at high risk for serious flu complications. This includes older adults, children under the age of two, people with chronic health conditions like diabetes, cancer, or heart conditions, and pregnant women.

Resources:

- Visit phd5.idaho.gov for clinic schedules and contact information.
- Idaho RSV data: <https://www.getthehealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/resp-syncyt>
- Idaho Flu data: <https://www.getthehealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/infectious-disease-idaho>
- South central Idaho COVID-19 data:
https://public.tableau.com/views/DataDashboard2_0_16487617507500/Story1?:language=en-US&:embed=y&:embed_code_version=3&:loadOrderID=0&:display_count=y&publish=yes&:origin=viz_share_link